

there
for you

supporting UNISON members
when life gets tough



How we make a difference

There for You is here for you

We know that UNISON members, like so many people, experience all sorts of pressures in their lives affecting both home and work.

We offer a confidential advice and support service exclusively for UNISON members and their dependents.

Whether it's practical help or simply someone to talk to about those things that are worrying you, our professional staff and specially trained branch welfare officers are there for you.

This booklet explains what we offer and how you can access our services as well as information about how you can volunteer or help fundraise so that we can continue to help UNISON members who have no one else to turn to.

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- An elderly couple is walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a wooded area. The man is on the left, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and dark shorts, and the woman is on the right, wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt and light-colored trousers. They are holding hands. The background is filled with green trees and foliage.
- Financial assistance
 - Debt advice
 - Wellbeing breaks
 - Support and information

**If you are struggling through
an unexpected crisis
There for You is here to help...**

Who do we help?

To use our services, you need to be a current member of UNISON.

Our help can also extend to your partner and immediate dependents. Or, a partner of a member who has died can apply in their own right. If you're not sure if you are eligible just speak to one of our staff.

At a glance we provide:

- Financial assistance to suit a range of circumstances
- Debt advice for when paying your debts has become a major worry
- Wellbeing breaks covering a range of situations such as a long period of ill-health
- Information and practical support on a wide range of subjects.

Our service is completely confidential.



Financial assistance

No matter how well we think we manage our finances, money difficulties can arise when you least expect it.

An extended illness, relationship breakdown, family bereavement, or other event can turn life upside down and result in financial difficulties or unexpected costs.

That's where we come in. Every year thousands of UNISON members and their families are helped according to their needs. For example grants for essential bills and household items, heating costs, fares to hospital as well as grants for special equipment and adaptations. Sometimes all that's required is some financial 'breathing space' while other practical help is obtained.

Although we do have to make an assessment of your overall financial situation we try to do this quickly and sensitively.



Debt advice and support

Struggling with debt? We can help get you back on an even keel

Most of us can live with a little debt much of the time. But if you or your partner suddenly find yourself out of work, reduced to sick pay, caring for a family member or other unexpected situation, making ends meet can suddenly become much harder. Being unable to meet debt repayments can lead to pressure from creditors and it can soon become difficult to pay even essential bills. The situation can spiral out of control very quickly.

You can get back in charge by contacting UNISON Debtline, our confidential debt advice service operated through our partners at Payplan. Advisers will talk you through possible solutions, give advice

on budgeting and, support you in taking action to reduce your debts.

They are also aware of the range of grants and other services that There for You can offer so will often refer members to us if they think we can help.

For immediate debt advice call
0800 389 3302.



Well-being break

Need a chance to get away but can't afford the cost?

We all need a break sometimes for example to help us recover from an illness, accident or operation that has kept us off work for lengthy spells; to take a much needed break from caring responsibilities or get over a tragic event. Or, for families under pressure, an opportunity to enjoy quality time together. For many members a break can be a lifeline rather than a luxury.

If you're going through a difficult period and a break seems out of reach speak to your branch welfare officer or give us a call.



Support and information

Need to talk to someone?

Sometimes the best help is someone to talk to. We have our staff and a network of trained branch welfare officers who are there to listen if you want to talk about what is worrying you. Branch welfare officers also offer practical help in completing applications for assistance and guide you through the application process.

Help from other organisations

It's not always easy to know exactly where to go for information or support. We can put you in touch with the right people to help you with your difficulties. Of course we are always very careful to ensure our service is confidential and will only talk to people outside with your agreement.



Check your benefits

Billions of pounds in welfare benefits go unclaimed every year. If you are on a low income, we can help you to maximise your entitlement to benefits through our online benefits checker.

Budget calculator

Take a few minutes to create your own personal budget plan by trying our user-friendly online budget planner. It will help you control your finances and contains useful tips on how you can make savings.

Information guides

On our website you will find lots more useful information about how we work as well as information guides on a range of issues which you can download.



Get involved!

Volunteering

Our branch welfare officers are incredibly passionate and committed to helping other UNISON members and without them we couldn't help as many as we do. Yet if we had more welfare officers, we could help even more people.

The role involves raising awareness in the branch of the help that is available, and assisting individual members with advice and support. In return we provide training as well as help and encouragement from our professional staff.

Many of our branch welfare officers get lots of satisfaction from taking on this role and some use it as a stepping stone to a new career.



Fundraising

From holding a cake sale to running a marathon or, taking part in one of our challenge events – there are so many different ways to show your support for There for You and make a huge difference to lives of those members who through no

fault of their own are struggling.

You can also make a regular donation by joining the



UNISON lottery – not only will you be making a regular donation, you may also be in with a chance of winning a cash prize each month.

You can also donate online via our website unison.org.uk/thereforyou

To find out more about ways you can support us, please email thereforyou@unison.co.uk or call 020 7121 5620. Or for fundraising ideas go to our website.



How do I get help?

Phone or email

To find out how we might be able to help speak to your branch welfare officer. You can get their details from your branch or by contacting UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857

6am-Midnight Monday to Friday

9am-4pm Saturday

Alternatively give us a call on 020 7121 5620

9am-5pm Monday to Friday

Or email thereforyou@unison.co.uk



Financial assistance

For financial help apply online at unison.org.uk/thereforyou or alternatively email thereforyou@unison.co.uk for an application form. If you need help completing the form, your branch welfare officer is there to support you.

Once we've received your form, one of our experienced case workers will assess your application and let you know if we can help. You can also expect information on benefits and help that may be available from elsewhere.

For immediate debt advice call UNISON Debtline

0800 389 3302

8am-9pm Monday to Friday

9am-3pm Saturday



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You can find out more about
the support we offer at

**[www.unison.org.uk/
thereforyou](http://www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou)**

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